1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

disappeared entirely from much of the landscape. Since the British settled first in the well-watered fertile areas of the east and southeast, it was the tribes of these regions who disappeared earliest, so that in the present state of Victoria which once contained a comparatively dense native population, an aborigine at the present time is about as rare as a full-blood Indian in Massachusetts and for much the same reasons.

White settlement in Australia since Cook's discovery of the fertile southeast corner has tended, however, to be very localized and uneven. The lack of water in the desert and semidesert areas has continued to hamper or inhibit white occupation. Moreover, even in some places where the rainfall is relatively high, such as the northern and northwestern coastlines, isolation has continued to make these regions unattractive to any heavy white intrusion. In American terms, such lands have remained until the present day as frontier areas ("The Outback" is what the Australian city dwellers call them) and in such regions the native or aborigine ("abo" in Australian slang) can still be found, often in surprisingly large numbers and in many cases still practicing and adhering to many of the traditional customs of his ancestors. In the central desert regions the western neighbors of the Arunta continue to practice something not far removed from their aboriginal tribal life on land which the white man regards as useless for settlement purposes. Further north, in the area called Arnhem Land, on the western side of the Gulf of Carpentaria, there exists an enormous stretch of inaccessible but not at all hopeless country in which the whites have shown very little interest and in which native tribes such as the Murngin (studied by Lloyd Warner) still retain much of their traditional culture. Similarly, to the west of Arnhem Land, along the coastline and on islands lying offshore, isolation and lack of white settlement have permitted a number of tribes to continue down to the present time relatively untouched by European influences. Since the annual rainfall along the northern coast is appreciable and reliable, some of these tribes live in country that is much more favorable to hunters and gatherers than is the desert area inhabited by the Arunta and their neighbors. Among these north-coast tribes the people occupying Melville and Bathurst Islands and who call themselves Tiwi have twice been studied by modern anthropologists—by Hart in 1928-30 and by Pilling in 1953-54. The brief account which follows is presented with two main objectives in view: first, to explain how this Australian culture operated as a going concern in aboriginal times, and second, to analyze what has happened to it as it was brought into contact with the modern world.

Tjipripu River, stands the Snake Bay Native Settlement where about 180-200 natives live along with two or three white employees of the Department of Welfare of the Australian Government and their families.

It was not always like this. Formerly there were no white men and the tribe lived scattered throughout the entire countryside. The land was divided into "countries," each owned by a division of the tribe, and providing the owners with all necessary food, clothing, and shelter. Although many changes have come to the tribe in the last fifty years through contact with the early buffalo shooters, the missionaries, and the government, the individual Tiwi is, with few exceptions, a hunter at heart. He may have acquired new skills such as a knowledge of English, and the ability to work at cutting lumber in the sawmill or driving a truck, but in doing so he has not lost the skill to track down the wallabies or possums in the bush or fish in the sea, nor has he lost the desire to do so. There are, of course, exceptions—those who prefer working in the settlement or in Darwin and attempt to make their own way into the white man's world. A few are successful and never return; others, not so successful, try it for a while and return to alternate between doing their bit in the settlement and going on "vacation" into the bush when they feel the need of a change of pace.

By the end of October I too felt the need of a change of scene. I had been living at the settlement or close to it for seven months. I had watched the Tiwi as they built the settlement buildings, started formal schooling and helped run the everyday affairs of a community of two hundred souls. I had watched them in the evenings when they often performed portions of their lengthy ceremonies necessary to the proper burial of a fellow tribal member. I had accompanied them on weekends whenever they had camped in the surrounding countryside, and had gathered and consumed the tasty native food as a variation to corned beef, vegetables, flour, tea, and sugar of the settlement menu. But after seven months I too grew tired of corned beef, and as the daily increasing humidity announced the approach of the wet season I was anxious to go hunting once more before travel became difficult. Another sign of the approaching change of seasons, observed with great interest by the natives,

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 OI20 Tiwi OI20

Fig. 2 Dolly. The painted necklace is her ornament for the day.

was the increasing flocks of geese flying over to the east of us to their feeding grounds in the fresh-water swamps at the head of the Paluwiunga River. Since the Superintendent of the settlement had a plan to build a permanent camp for future crocodile hunts near this very spot, this seemed an ideal time for all concerned to make a trip to this area.

As there was a shortage of water transport (only four dug-out canoes and one small motor launch), the main group of twenty men, women, and children was taken in the canoes across Snake Bay the day before and left to "foot-walk" along the coast to the Paluwiunga. The Superintendent and his son went ahead in the motor launch and I followed the next day in "number one" canoe with my chosen companions. I had originally invited my chief informant Dolly and her husband Malony, but they had had a "proper row" a few nights previously and weren't speaking. Dolly would have come alone because the object of this row, her boy-friend, Billy-Two, was going, but public opinion was too strong in view of the very recent objection by her husband, and she begged out of the trip. In their place the choice of Albert and Agnes was obvious. They had been close associates of the expedition and of mine since our arrival. They were a young couple in their early twenties, but recently married, and very much in love—there would be no complicating boy-friend problems with them. But above all, Albert loved to hunt and he was a good man to be with in the bush. He was a quiet, serious young man and very modest about his accomplishments. Because of this he was not a good informant for native lore or customs; he would always refer us to the old men who knew much more than he. However, he was a conformist to these